

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2992

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7497

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION: ARMY TIGHTENS CONTROL

REF: ISLAMABAD 7473

1. THREE NEW MARTIAL LAW REGULATIONS WERE ISSUED BY THE ARMY REGIME ON JULY 21 AS GENERAL ZIA FURTHER TIGHTENED CONTROL. THE FIRST PROVIDES A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF DEATH FOR ANYONE WHO SEEKS TO INCITE THE TERRITORIAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE DISMEMBERMENT OF PAKSITAN ON A PROVINCIAL, LINGUISTIC OR SECTARIAN BASIS. THE SECOND IMPOSES THE SAME PENALTY FOR "SEDUCING" A MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES
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OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT FORCE FROM CARRYING OUT HIS DUTY. LESSER PUNISHMENTS HAVE BEEN STIPULATED UNDER THE THIRD REGULATION FOR IMPERSONATING A MEMEBER OF THE ARMED FORCES OR OTHER LAW ENFORCING AGENCIES.

2. PRESS REPORTS OF UNKNOWN RELAIABILITY ON JULY 22 INDICATE THAT THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION (MLA) HAS

DECIDED TO PROSECUTE ALL CIVIL SERVANTS WHO HELPED RIG THE MARCH 7 ELECTIONS. A LIST INCLUDING THE NAMES OF SUCH HIGH OFFICIALS AS THE CHIEF SECRETARIES AND HOME SECRETARIES OF PUNJAB AND SIND, SOME DIVISIONAL AND DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS, SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS, TOP LEVEL MANAGERS IN RADIO AND TV AND OTHERS INVOLVED WILL REPORTEDLY BE MADE PUBLIC IN A DAY OR TWO. QUOTING INFORMED SOURCES, THE STORY STATED THAT MOST OF THE OFFICIALS DEPUTED TO ASSIST THE ELECTION COMMISSION NOT ONLY FAILED TO CHECK CORRUPT PRACTICES, BUT THEMSELVES HELPED RIG THE ELECTIONS.

3. MEANWHILE, THE MLA PRESSES AHEAD WITH PLANS TO HOLD FRESH ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER. SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN IN RAWALPINDI ON JULY 21, CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER JUSTICE MUSTAQ HUSSAIN ANNOUNCED THAT THE ELECTION RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT HAVE BEEN FINALIZED AND WILL SOON BE MADE PUBLIC FOLLOWING REVIEW BY THE MILITARY COUNCIL. MUSTAQ SAID AS MANY PROPOSALS AS POSSIBLE HAD BEEN ACCOMMODATED TO ENSURE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HE WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT POWERS TO DEAL PROMPTLY WITH ANY MALPRACTICES OR IRREGULARITIES.

4. COMMENT: SOME OBSERVERS VIEW THE ARMY'S LATEST MOVES TO IMPOSE TOUGHER CONTROLS AND PROSECUTE CIVIL SERVANTS AS EVIDENCE THAT ZIA MAY WISH TO POSTPONE THE POLLS AND
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REMAIN IN POWER. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY MERELY WISHES TO MAINTAIN A TIGHT GRIP WHILE IT PREPARES TO SHEPHERD THE NATION THROUGH WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE A DIFFICULT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. WE HAVE NO REASON AT PRESENT TO SUSPECT THAT ZIA INTENDS TO DEVIATE FROM HIS PUBLICLY STATED ELECTION PROGRAM.
HUMMEL

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